A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

AS THE year of our Lord 1949 draws to a close, it seems meet and proper that this page be devoted to a resume of just what the year has contributed to the security of the Nation, the development of its Armed Forces, and how it goes with the National Guard of the United States. Certainly, there has been steady progress along all lines of national security, and equally certainly there have been trials, tribulations and frustration, but in spite of the growing pains inherent in the so-called unification of the Armed Forces it must be conceded that unification is working and there is reason to believe that it will continue to work with increasing effectiveness with the passage of time.

In the field of legislation, and notably in the matter of appropriations, the Armed Forces fared exceptionally well at the hands of the Congress when we consider the round figure of more than 15 billion in outright appropriations and authorizations. Of this amount the National Guard received 331 million dollars, 216 million for the Army National Guard and 115 million for the Air National Guard. True it is that a greater sum was required to adequately maintain an aggregate strength of 399,500 and equally true is it that a substantial sum is required for the orderly expansion of our military establishment. However, there were complications which have to be resolved before such a program becomes a fait accompli. Nevertheless, it is passing strange that the Organized Reserve Corps as the part of the Reserve Army (general) now able to acquire land and construct armories as the result of a 10 million dollar construction item, the language of which is so critical with the language of the construction item for the National Guard and that the National Guard could not construct new armories. We rejoice that our brothers-in-arms of the Organized Reserve Corps are able to proceed with their armory construction program and hope they will be able to communicate in its respect. By the same token the National Guard may well assume that the Congress will do its duty in the National Guard during the fiscal year 1950.

There were several legislative highlights where the Armed Forces and the National Guard were concerned and notably in the enactment of the Career Compensation Bill. enactment of this badly needed legislation gave a great boost to the morale of the personnel of the Armed Forces.

Of course there were disappointments, but such disappointments should serve to intensify the efforts of all concerned to round out the legislative program during the Second Session of the 81st Congress. One matter of primary concern is the retenion or elimination of Selective Service. The National Guard Association believes very much with the Secretary of the Army that the Selective Service System should be retained as an emergency measure, but present indications are none too certain that such will be the case. The matter of the establishment of a system of universal military training or national security service, whichever you will, no doubt will be fostered but prospects for enactment are remote.

The National Guard can look back on 1949 as a year of accomplishments, notably in the organizational field. As THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN goes to print for the first time in 1950, the National Guard had attained an aggregate strength in excess of 391,000—almost attaining its authorized strength of 399,500 fixed by Congress for 30 June 1950. It might be well that we have gone far too far and too fast, for had we not attained that strength until near the end of the year our aggregate strength for the year would have been less and thus our dollars would have gone further. As the 71st General Conference contended in a strong resolution, we cannot and will not continue to expand indefinitely unless adequate provisions are made for a joint armory construction program by the Federal Government and the States and there is assurance that the armories to be constructed will be properly equipped. We have gone far beyond the saturation point and it is to be hoped that the Civilian Components Policy Board will bring forth a realistic troop basis for the National Guard and the Organized Reserve Corps.

Our relations with the Department of the Army are the best in history. We are hopeful that the new year will resolve many vexing questions—where the Department of the Air Force and the National Guard are concerned—and that an eventual cordial result will follow. Such an eventuality, we believe, will make possible the resolving of many matters now in dispute and on an amicable basis. The Air National Guard has done a magnificent job in completing its organization and is indeed a great force. It can be made even greater and seeing it all up, all that we demand from the Department of the Air Force is leadership and that is our right.

With respect to the National Guard Association and the National Guardman Publishing Company, on the whole it has been a good year but it could and should have been far better. Unfortunately there are none of the States whose Officers have been Warrant Officers who seemingly are content to coast while others bear the heat and burden of the day. A great effort and concentration would correct this situation for after all it is a case of one for all and all for one.

May I, in conclusion congratulate the States, the Army and Air National Guard on a job exceedingly well done for the year that is now passing into history, and to wish to Guardsmen everywhere a most prosperous and Happy New Year.

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